



United States Department of State

Office of Foreign Missions
Washington, D.C. 20520

NOTICE

Tax Exemption for Foreign Mission Personnel Traveling on International Flights to and from the United States

The Office of Foreign Missions (OFM) wishes to clarify for the diplomatic community of the procedures to claim tax exemption on international airline tickets. This replaces OFM's previous notice titled, *Regarding Tax Exemption for Foreign Diplomats Traveling on International Flights to and from the United States*, dated September 21, 2005.

The purpose of this notice is to share information concerning the availability of diplomatic tax exemption on international airline tickets to and from the United States and to help foreign mission personnel choose the best approach for securing this exemption when purchasing international airline tickets.

Individuals who wish to claim exemption from the taxes described below must present an A-1 or 2 or a G-1 through 4 series visa when purchasing airline tickets. The presentation of a tax exemption card is *not* required to receive this benefit.

The United States Government levies charges for specific services applicable to all users of the American civil aviation systems to be collected into the Airport and Airway Trust Fund for the improvement and maintenance of those systems. Under Revenue Ruling 72-10 by the Internal Revenue Service (1972-1 C.B. 343), of foreign diplomats, consular and other officers, agencies or commissions of foreign governments, and employees of international organizations are subject to the taxes that contribute to the Airport and Airway Trust Fund. Those taxes include:

- U.S. Domestic Transportation Tax
- U.S. International Departure Tax
- U.S. International Arrival Tax
- Passenger Facilities Charge
- Federal Security Segment Tax
- Alaska/Hawaii Domestic Transportation Tax
- Alaska/Hawaii International Departure Tax

Fees from which A and G series visa holders are exempt include:

- U.S. Customs Fee
- Immigration User Fee
- Animal and Plant Health Inspection (APHIS) Fee

By law, agents issuing airline tickets are obligated to comply with the three exemptions presented above. As a result, many airlines have drafted policies to ensure that their ticketing agents grant properly requested tax exemption. In addition, most airlines and travel agents utilize electronic ticketing systems, such as Sabre or Worldspan, enabling agents to exempt certain fees or taxes from the total cost of the airfare.

Missions and individuals who wish to ensure that their tax exemptions are honored should ask the ticketing agent or the travel agent if he/she is familiar with how to enter diplomatic tax exempt status when he/she is creating the ticket. If the ticketing agent or travel agent says that he/she is not familiar with diplomatic tax exemptions, the mission or individual should feel free to share this notice with that agent. If the ticketing agent or travel agent should refuse to enter a properly claimed diplomatic tax exemption, the mission or individual diplomat should purchase air tickets elsewhere.

OFM also reminds all missions and mission personnel that exemptions of any kind cannot be granted when making purchases of airline tickets on the Internet (see *Notice Regarding Diplomatic Tax Exemption on Internet Purchases*, February 14, 2003). Whether with purchases made on the Internet or elsewhere, OFM cannot assist in obtaining reimbursements once such charges are paid.

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